1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

the ashes are thrown is called the *Kharighat* and the ceremony described as *khari thanda karna*—"the cooling of the ashes."

THE RETURN TO THE DWELLING PLACE. Whether the body has been buried or burned, the return from that place to the house is essentially the same. The party moves off one by one after encircling the spot, but presently the men linger and group themselves together, and the women do likewise in another group in the rear. Having once completed the round of the grave or cremation place, they should not look backwards lest the movement be interpreted by the spirit as an invitation to come along; or lest they be attacked. The women bring back with them any of the sweets that remained after placing them along the pathway as they went toward the funeral place, also some of the water left after washing the body. The sweets are cast into the tank or river in which they bathe, and the water is kept till they reach the house after the ceremonial bath, when a bit of it may be mixed with *haldi* and scattered on the chief mourner or others, and the rest used to put out any fires in the house.

Bathing. The ceremonial bath should be taken in a tank or a stream, and if necessary a detour is made to include one in their return trip. If neither is available water from a well may be used, but the actual bathing must be at some distance from the well and the water should be drawn by some one who was not at the burial ground. Whether the bath is taken at a tank or stream, the men should bathe first. The bathers should line up and if possible should all go under the water together. After being submerged once or twice they step back to the bank and proceed home in their wet clothes. The women then bathe following much the same procedure, and go home in wet clothes. Reaching there fresh water must be used to wash their feet and now they may enter the house.

Cleaning the House. During the next few hours after the return home there is much to do. All clothes have to be changed and the dirty ones washed, preferably by a Hindu *dhobi*. All the pots and vessels made of earthenware must be thrown out upon the refuse pile. Sometimes they are broken and at other times are set out and the Domar or Basor comes and takes them away. The floors and walls of the house have to be plastered and thoroughly cleaned. The chief male mourner must have his head and face shaved, but a little tuft of hair, the sacred scalp lock or *chutiya*, is generally left. Usually a Hindu *nai* is called in for this, although the work may also be done

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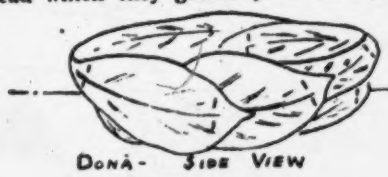
768 765 [302] by a Kol. Often all male members of the family are shaved in this manner. Nothing is done to the female mourners to correspond with this. Unkempt hair and dirty clothes are the signs of their mourning.

765 MOURNING FOR THE DEAD (*Daswi*). This may also be considered as the period of uncleanness, although many Kols do not recognize it as such. The number of days that the dead should be mourned, and certain taboos observed, varies according to sex and age. For a man or for a married youth the period is ten days, hence "*daswi*";—for a woman or a married maiden nine days; for a child it varies according to age: five days, three days, or, if it is a very small child there is no period of mourning at all. All over the area the customs are uniform [184] in the cases of men and women, but for children there seems to be a considerable variation of custom.

765 262 During the period of mourning certain foods are taboo and certain kinds of cooking vessels must not be used in the preparation of food. Only simple food should be eaten: nothing should therefore be cooked in *ghi* or oils. No salt or flesh of any kind should be taken. The cooking vessels which are taboo are those in which rich foods are prepared and cooked in oils and *ghi*, such as a frying pan. This rules out the cooking of *puris*. The food during that period must always be [264] eaten at home, and on no account should one accept food cooked in another's house or by someone who is not a member of the family, even if it is cooked in his own house. Violators of these regulations [623] are dealt with by the *panch*. One should also stay pretty close to home, and should not freely enter others' houses, especially at the time they are eating.

765 775 FEEDING THE DEAD. The Kols have a custom of feeding the dead which they generally call *dona*, or *dauna rakhna*. The dead should be fed twice daily during the period of mourning if one can afford it, and if not, once in the evening. This is discontinued after the funeral feast. The chief mourner is generally expected to prepare this food, or it may be prepared along with the ordinary household food. Such food is placed on a *dona*, leaf-plate, and is taken out from the house to a distance of from thirty to forty yards, in the direction of the graveyard. This is placed in the crotch of a tree or it may be set down on the ground. Other things may also be placed there, things the

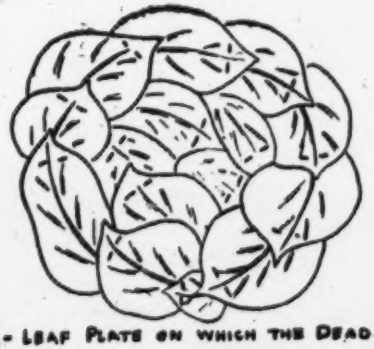


DONA - SIDE VIEW

Fig. 23

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

departed liked best in life : sweets, tobacco, and the like. A little water is generally left too. They assert that liquor is never put out. As soon as the food is set out they quickly turn and do not look back lest they should disturb the eater. If the *masan* is not too far away the food may



DONÄ - LEAF PLATE ON WHICH THE DEAD ARE FED

Fig. 24

be placed on the grave. The usual procedure, though, is to place it near the old home. The belief is that the spirit of the deceased wanders about for ten days and frequents his old haunts. After ten days *dutas*, corresponding to angels, come for the soul and conduct it to another realm. The Kols seem to have no great fear of the spirits of their departed. Nothing is done to appease their anger, and they are thought to be in general kindly disposed toward their loved ones. There was some evidence of fear in a few cases where, they said, if the ashes are not deposited in the river the spirits might come and trouble them ; but this may be a part of another outlook. On the whole Kols regard their dead as kindly. The food, which they set out day by day, is consumed by birds or other animals. There is no special kind of food placed out, merely that used by them in the house during the time of mourning.

FUNERAL FEAST (*Din Pani*). If the deceased was a male the funeral feast occurs on the tenth day after the death, and if a female on the ninth day. The time of the feast after a child's death is not so uniform. Unless the child is grown up and rather important, it is not usual to have a feast ; or if there is one it is a private one within the home. But in the case of adults such a feast must always be given, otherwise the honour of the tribe would be tainted, and the family rebuked by the *panch*. On the morning of the feast preparations for it are made in the house.

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765 [302] The home is plastered, the barber is called and the faces are shaved and the nails of both hands and feet are pared. A special bath is taken and clean clothes put on. The people who are invited to such a feast are usually only relatives, though occasionally a larger group of the deceased's tribal friends may be invited. Others, who do not actually eat, are there to watch and talk, making quite a crowd. Special food has been prepared, and the things tabooed during the period of mourning are freely made use of and eaten at the feast. Hereafter all the members of the household, except the chief mourner, may freely partake of any food and there are no restrictions. The chief mourner eats this food at the feast, but for a year following must continue to observe the food taboos of the first ten days as noted above. There are no dishes or food peculiar to the funeral feast; it and the wedding feast may be much alike as far as the [262] kinds of foods are concerned—rice, pulse, curries, of either vegetables or meats, *puris*, *bara*, *dahi*, *chapatis*, and the like. The presence of a large group is considered desirable and is a sign of solidarity.

765 197 The first morsel consumed at the funeral feast should not be taken by a Kol. It is usually the custom to call in a Hindu lower caste man, a Basor, who eats this. At this time he is called *Mahabrahmin*—great priest.[1] He is summoned only in the case of adults. Certain of the deceased's possessions are also his right and he is given things such as the axe, knife, sickle, *khurpi*, etc. In Maihar the general report was that a Basor is never called in for any funeral feast. When called in it is the duty of the Basor to take the first morsel of food. He also has a right to take away with him the vessels from which he has eaten, should they be of brass. If he is fed on a leaf plate he has the right to certain brass vessels used in serving. At any rate he gets something. No one can begin to eat till he has begun, and often he delays it, asking for a boon or gift of some kind. The Kols have been able to give no explanation of why he must be called. A Basor was also asked, and he said that it is because Kols fear to take the first bite, as it must be offered to the deceased and in his name. He might therefore come and possess the person who takes the first bite, and to avoid this possibility they call some one who is not of their family. Is not the Basor afraid? we enquired. No, he is not. The word *Mahabrahmin* is usually applied to the funeral priest, who is himself a Brahmin. Crooke[2] has given an account of his duties: the Basor seems to perform his duties for the Kols and they in return call him *Mahabrahmin*.

1 Dr. Guha suggests that the importance attached to the Basor may indicate that these observances were borrowed from the Hindus and that the Basor is the symbol of the Hindus.

2 Crooke, William, *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 144.

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After the Basor begins the others may start and all set out to enjoy themselves. Liquor is sometimes freely consumed on such occasions.

Another feast, a family one called *barkhi* (H. *Barsi*), is given after a year, and after this the chief mourner can eat as he likes; it also marks his entry into the society once again. During the year of mourning it is sometimes his custom to eat normal foods at home, but never to go to a feast elsewhere.

MISCELLANEOUS DEATH CUSTOMS. After the return from the graveyard there is no formal visiting of the spot unless it be for the purpose of putting food upon the grave. After three or four days someone from the household may pay the graveyard an informal visit to see if everything is all right and that the grave has not been disturbed by animals. No flowers are put on the grave at any time, and the bones are never dug up and buried again at some other place. Kols also say that they never throw bodies into the streams, although we were informed by one of them that it is sometimes done. At Satna in Rewa State it was related that some times a male corpse may be taken to a river, where the head is shaven by the Hindu *nai* whom they pay two to four annas. As the body is about to be cast into the river the mourners announce that they are ready to give the river a gift, naming a certain sum of money, which they will pay to the Brahmin presiding over that part of the river. The usual amount is Rs. 1-4. This is called *gaunda*—alms. As the body floats away they shout "Go and get salvation" and also the words, "we've been so long together, but from now on we are separated, you from us and we from you, and we shall now have nothing more to do with each other." After this they return to the house and bathe and prepare things as previously related.

There are adjustments necessary within the family after the death of the father or the mother. If the wife has died, all her clothes must be given away to the Domar or Basor. A second wife should never wear the clothes of a deceased woman. However, she may wear the metallic jewellery and ornaments of the first wife, and they are usually given to her.

If the father should die his clothes should also be given away. The widow has to break her glass bangles and this is usually done at the place and the time of the funeral. They may be broken by a member of the family, or a Hindu *nai* may be called. The widow is not required to put away her metallic ornaments.

There is no trace of *sati* or widow burning among the Kols. We found none who had ever heard of a Kolin doing it. One man said: "We

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

764
762 cannot get such faithful wives—they prefer to run away," and there
522 was a hearty laugh.

766 In some parts of India the bodies of young children are sometimes buried under the floor of the house in which they lived but this custom does not prevail among the Kols. Children are buried in the regular *masan*, and not in a special place by themselves. If both mother and child die at the time of childbirth they are buried together in one grave. If they die on different days so that they cannot be buried together they are given separate burials.

Those dying abnormal deaths, by suicide, accident, or childbirth, are not treated differently from those dying in other ways. Kols are unlike most Hindus in this respect.

764 Sometimes grass plays a part in the funeral ceremonies, and in
765 Rewa State we found that Kols used *urai* grass (*Vetiveria zizanioides*)
824 at such a time. It was stated that at the time of bathing after the return
184 from the funeral ground a bunch of *urai* grass should be held in the right hand and that it too should be bathed. At least the chief mourner should do this. During the following days and until the time of the funeral feast this same bunch of grass should be carefully washed every day. On the day of the funeral feast it is thrown into the tank or river.

764 An interesting explanation of the use of small plugs if gold put into
823 holes bored in the front teeth came from the Rewa State. It was said
301 that when one died and the body was cremated the teeth would not be
184 consumed by the fire and the gold would still be in them Or even if the gold had melted out it would be in the ashes, and would be gathered
[782 with them and taken to the river. The throwing of gold into a
775] river, particularly the Ganges, is a gift to the gods and pleases them and the spirit gets *aram*—rest—in the after life in *baikuntha*—the abode of *Vishnu*.

764 Tattoo marks are said to have a certain significance at the time
304 of death. This applies to women as the men are not tattooed. If a
789 woman has tattoo marks on her forearm, and also on her upper arm, the arms are so folded when she is placed in the grave that the two tattooed places touch each other. This is said to somehow afford protection, please the gods and help the spirit on its way.[1] See also pages 29 and 30.

764 The chief mourner should also keep a piece of iron about his person
823 during the days of mourning, and possibly ever after. Sometimes, just before burial, this piece which is to act as a charm, is touched to the

1 See Crooke, *Op. Cit.*, p. 296.

l;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

171 789 776 examples are current among low caste Hindus and do not represent the more polished type to be found higher up.

Milk. The use of milk has been mentioned in connection with 272 776 the magic circle. The good spirits like it, and certain evil spirits are passionately fond of it. Milk is scattered over the ashes after the 782 funeral pyre has burnt down. Milk propitiates Nag, the serpent god. 789

Names. Great care should be exercised in the selection and use 551 of names, as they become a part of one's personality. A good name 789 is also attractive to evil spirits, and if the spirits come to know that a certain child has such a name they may make an attack on the innocent thing. Therefore, call the child by an evil name such as 'fly', 'filth', 'one-eyed', and the spirits will not condescend to notice him. [754] Such names protect in another manner as well. If one gets possession of the name of someone—his real name—he may, through the charms of black magic, work harm to the person concerned. Therefore the child's true name should never be known to people lest they should work ill with it. The use of magic on a false name is ineffective and no harm can come to one.

789 *Noises* of various types are demon-scarers for they dislike noise; [825] hence the beating of drums, the occasional fireworks and other devices, by which loud noises are produced when necessary.

Nuts and Seeds of various kinds are useful. Many Kol children 789 have a *ghata* nut (*Ziziphys xylopyrus?*) tied to a string which is hung 824 somewhere about the person, often on the wrist. Mustard seeds are freely sprinkled about if spirits are expected, and, as in the case of limes, distract their attention. They are scattered round the place where a body is burnt. Black *urad* pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*) is often [585] used on similar occasions. The *supari* nut (*Areca catechu*) is placed below the sacred pole in the marriage booth and under the foundation stone of the house. These are in this manner protected from evil.

Salt has its magic use among the Kols. It has a preservative 789 power, and this, together with its power over demons, accounts for 263 its being scattered over the place where the dead have been cremated. [765] It should not be put into the food during the period of mourning after a death in the home, and the chief mourner should not use it for a year.

755 *Scape Animals.* Among Kols there is a belief that an evil spirit 787 resident in a man may be transferred to an animal and the man thus freed. It is not unusual to bring a man believed to be possessed of 825 a spirit before the shrine together with a chicken or goat, usually the 782 former. The *panda* invokes Khermai amid singing and drumming, or mostly drumming, and there may be a *bawa* along with it. Under